International Labour Organization

User's manual to the ILO's Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

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User's manual to the ILO's Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

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Design and layout : MAS

This user's manual was prepared with the objective of encouraging and assisting workers' organizations to engage in policy discussions at all levels in shaping just transition, including in the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement.

Workers' organizations are not passive bystanders, but agents of change able to develop new pathways to sustainability and to ensure that a transition not only delivers on climate policy objectives but incorporates the broader principles of sustainable development and decent work.

Thank you for your interest in *the ILO's Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, hereafter referred to as the ILO Guidelines.

This manual will help you understand **what** the ILO Guidelines are about, **why** they are important and **how** they can be used.

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▶ Specifications of the ILO Guidelines

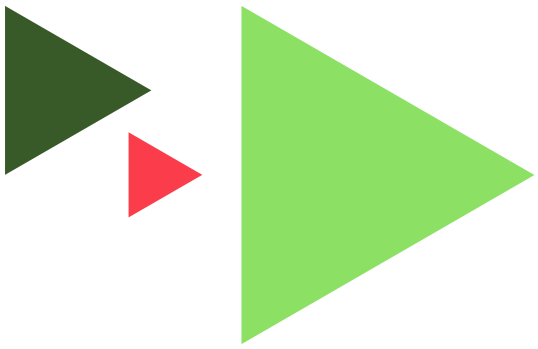
- ▶ Year of adoption: 2015
- ▶ Production: ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts 5–9 October 2015, Geneva, Switzerland.
- ▶ Experts involved: Governments, workers' and employers' organizations (eight representatives from each group)
- ▶ Five sections:
  I. Background and scope
  II. Our vision
  III. Opportunities and challenges
  IV. Guiding principles
  V. Key policy areas and institutional arrangements for a just transition for all
- ▶ Two annexes:
  I. Some international labour standards and resolutions that may be relevant to a just transition framework
  II. List of participants, Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs

Before you start, read the first step instruction and the safety warnings.

▶ First step instruction

Read *The ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*

- ▶ Click for English version here.



▶ Safety warnings

▶ Never disassemble, attempt to repair or overhaul the ILO Guidelines. Touching essential components might cause an unfair transition. Any manipulation might also cause malfunction of the just transition process. Please contact the ILO when further explanation of its definition is needed.

ILO Green Jobs Programme (GREEN):

- ▶ E-mail
- ▶ Web

The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV):

- ▶ E-mail
- ▶ Web

▶ Do not remove the designated constituents from the process of just transition. The ILO Guidelines as agreed by the Experts are intended to provide non-binding practical orientation to governments and social partners, with some specific options on how to formulate, implement and monitor the policy framework, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities.

The ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) are important in this regard. Only with the right to establish and join organizations of their own choosing will workers be able to formulate their programmes and influence tripartite policies and decisions for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.

▶ Do not expose the ILO Guidelines to water. Always keep it dry (paper copy version).

By 2050, the number of people at risk of the impact of floods will increase from its current level of 1.2 billion to 1.6 billion.[1]

The frequency and intensity of droughts are projected to increase, particularly in the Mediterranean region and southern Africa (medium confidence). The frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events are projected to increase in many regions (high confidence).[2]

1 See https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/climate-change/.

2 See https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2020/02/SPM_Updated-Jan20.pdf.

- Do not expose the ILO Guidelines to direct sunlight for a long period of time. This might make the text invisible (paper copy version).

  It is estimated that the percentage of total hours of work lost due to heat will rise to 2.2 per cent (equivalent to 80 million full-time jobs) by 2030.

  These estimates are based on a global temperature rise of 1.5°C by the end of the twenty-first century and on current labour force trends. This is most likely an underestimate (ILO 2019a).

- Only use recycled paper for printouts.

  Papermaking has an impact on the environment because it destroys trees in the process. According to data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), roughly 80,000 to 160,000 trees are cut down each day around the world, with a significant percentage being used in the paper industry.

  The paper recovery rate more than doubled from 24.6 per cent in 1970 to 56.1 per cent in 2015, demonstrating that most paper now goes through a recycling process (FAO 2018).

- Disposal of paper copies of the ILO Guidelines should be through local recycling points or by handing over to somebody who needs it for further use.

  The circular economy is a model for sustainability in resource use and consumption.

  Almost six million jobs can be created by moving away from an extract-manufacture-use-discard model and embracing the recycling, reuse, remanufacture, rental and longer durability of goods (ILO 2018b).

Following these warnings is a step towards more urgent action on climate change and the call for the need for a just transition. Should an incorrect use of the ILO Guidelines occur during the transition, determine whether it is safe to proceed. Consider both environmental and social impacts of your decisions. Do NOT be afraid to go back to the dialogue table.

▶ Q&A index

Find what you are looking for by using this Q&A index.

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▶ What are the ILO Guidelines?

The ILO Guidelines are a **tool** to support a just transition when addressing the direct and indirect impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on workers and the labour market. They seek to secure the livelihoods, income and jobs of those negatively affected by the green transition.

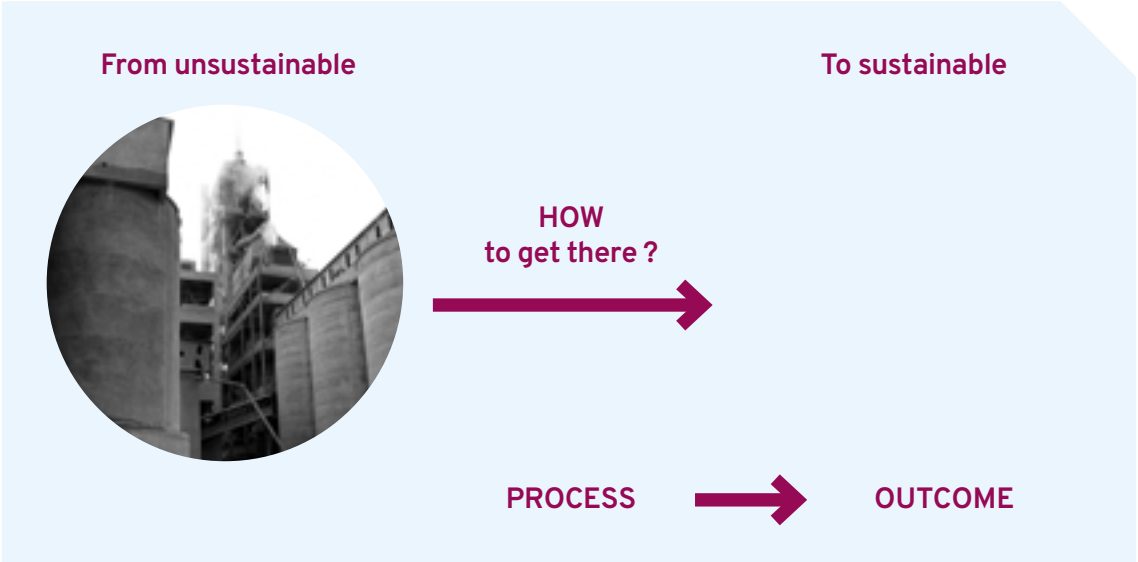
In an ILO perspective, this transition has **two main dimensions:**

The process

How we get to a future of environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. This is a process which should be based on a managed transition with meaningful social dialogue at all levels to guarantee that burden sharing is just and nobody is left behind. This guarantee is essential to get support in society for the ambitious policies that are needed.

The outcome

How we want the new employment and social landscape in a decarbonized economy to be. This outcome should be decent work for all in an inclusive society with the eradication of poverty as a goal.



The ILO Guidelines provide non-binding **practical orientation** to constituents – governments, workers' and employers' organizations – of the International Labour Organization (ILO) with some specific options on how to formulate, implement and monitor the policy framework in accordance with national circumstances and priorities. In addition, it highlights the need for adequate, informed and ongoing consultation with all other relevant stakeholders.

The **objectives** of the ILO Guidelines can be described with three 'Ps" – PLANNING, PARTICIPATION and POVERTY ALLEVIATION.

PLANNING because the transition will have huge impacts on jobs and workplaces.

- We do not want to close down polluting industries from one day to another without having plans in place for those affected.
- We want to ensure that workers in these industries are supported through, among others: social protection; skills upgrading; and early retirement schemes; and that new green industries can be established in communities with eventual redundancies.
- We need a planned transition. There will be no just transition by default, only by design!

Here, policy coherence is important as well as the involvement of all levels of governance.

Planning, and subsequently implementation, needs **PARTICIPATION**: participation by actors in the world of work, and by governments, workers' and employer's organizations through social dialogue. Social dialogue is a precondition for a just transition.

- We want to see the social partners participate in discussing and implementing the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement – in all countries.
- We want social dialogue at the enterprise and sectoral levels to assess opportunities and resolve challenges posed by the transition.

Finally, just transition is about **POVERTY ERADICATION** – leaving no one behind!

- We want to see working and living conditions improved, especially among the most vulnerable groups in society.
- We want decent work for all.

▶ Why are the ILO Guidelines important?

- Because there is **urgency** in addressing the climate change challenges.
- Because we need a global **definition** of just transition.
- Because we need a **human-centred approach** to the future.

Urgency

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a brief dip in carbon dioxide emissions. However, the world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century – far beyond the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C (UNEP 2020). According to the first part of the Sixth Assessment Report, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis,* by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades. It is thus time to pursue an economic recovery that incorporates strong decarbonization. More countries have to step up their commitments to able to achieve net-zero emissions goals by around mid-century.

The labour market has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO 2021a). The share of workers living in countries with COVID-19 related restrictions has been high, with 93 per cent of the world's workers residing in countries with some form of workplace closure measures in place in early January 2021. In 2020, 8.8 per cent of global working hours were lost relative to the fourth quarter of 2019, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. There were unprecedented global employment losses in 2020 of 114 million jobs relative to 2019. In relative terms, employment losses were higher for women (5.0 per cent) than for men, and for young workers (8.7 per cent) than for older workers. Global labour income (before taking into account income support measures) in 2020 is estimated to have declined by 8.3 per cent, which amounts to US$3.7 trillion, or 4.4 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP).

The comprehensive policy framework constituted by the ILO Guidelines takes into account the economic, environmental and social policy dimensions needed for a sustainable recovery.

Definition

A lot has been said about just transition and the use of the terminology has grown enormously in the last decade. However, the concept of just transition is not defined and used in a similar manner by all. That is why the ILO Guidelines are extremely important.

Just transition was an early trade union demand that has now become a mainstream policy tool applied by international institutions and treaties.

The first mention of just transition is attributed to US trade union leader, war veteran and peace activist, Tony Mazzocchi (1993) who pleaded for a "Superfund for workers" to provide financial support and opportunities for higher education for workers displaced by environmental protection policies. The president of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union laid out the Superfund/Just transition proposal in 1995 and by 1997 several US and Canadian unions had officially endorsed the just transition principle.

Two key features of the original claim for a just transition had a lasting effect on future interpretations. First, it should not be reduced to "welfare" (not just a "fancy funeral", as AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka put it), as there is a claim for public responsibility to facilitate and actively support a transition for the common interest (Labor Network for Sustainability 2017). The second is that decarbonization is a planned transition (with clearly defined objectives) and as such it cannot be handled as "just another transition" that affects workplaces and livelihoods. It needs dedicated and holistic policy approaches.

From 1997 to 2010, trade unions included the call for just transition in their statements to different Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The most visible result was the inclusion of the concept in the final agreement of the 16th COP, held in Cancun in December 2010 (UNFCCC 2010).[3]

At the UN, the ILO has been paving the way to make just transition an established element of the sustainable development agenda. Since 2008, the ILO has developed a wide-ranging programme dealing with green jobs and just transition. However, a lot has also been done in the past, laying the foundations for the work carried out today (Olsen and Kemter 2013). As part of the joint UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC Green Jobs Initiative, the report *Green Jobs* (ILO 2008) was the first comprehensive study on the emergence of a 'green economy' and its impact on the world of work. It highlighted the need for a just transition to make the shift to a low-carbon and sustainable society as equitable as possible. The ILO Guidelines, launched in 2015, became the anchor of just transition policies.

The UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), SDG 8 (on decent jobs and economic growth), SDG 12 (on sustainable consumption and production) and SDG 13 (on climate action) defines strategic objectives based on the principle of shared responsibility. By that point, just transition had become a mainstream narrative at the level of UNEP, CEDEFOP, OECD and UNFCCC and was included in the Preamble to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

▶ Box 1. Just transition in the 2005 Paris Climate Agreement

> *Taking into account* the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.

3 For more details on the history of the concept of just transition see ILO 2018a.

At the Katowice Climate Conference (COP24) 55 heads of state and government adopted the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration (UNFCCC 2018).

Following the United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019,[4] where some 46 countries[5] made commitments to support a just ecological transition by formulating national plans for a just transition through social dialogue, the UN Secretary-General and the ILO Director-General launched the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative at the COP25 in Madrid. This initiative is designed to support countries in implementing their national climate action commitments, while ensuring that jobs, well-being and a just transition remain at the heart of climate responses.

▶ Box 2. The Climate Action for Jobs (CA4J) Initiative

Climate and employment goals can and must go hand in hand.

The Paris Agreement on climate change, adopted in 2015, highlights the imperatives of a **just transition and the creation of decent work** as essential dimensions of climate change. While some important progress has been made, the required scale of efforts needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 is not yet enough. The Climate Action for Jobs Initiative will contribute to a Decade of Action, accelerating climate action through a just transition.

The Initiative aims at:

- Enabling ambitious climate action that delivers decent jobs and advances social justice.
- Supporting countries on bold solutions for a transition towards a sustainable future that is just and enjoys broad-based support.
- Facilitating an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

> "I call on all countries to embrace the International Labour Organization's Guidelines for a just transition and adopt them as minimum standard to ensure progress on decent work for all.
>
> ▶ **António Guterres** (UN Secretary-General)
> at the Powering Past Coal Alliance Summit, 2 March 2021

Source: ILO.

4 See https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/.

5 Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Benin, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Mali, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Panama, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay.

The idea of just transition should not be an 'add-on' to climate policy; it needs to be an integral part of the sustainable development policy framework.

A just transition is a transition towards a future which ensures climate action, sustainable development and decent work for all in its process as well as its outcome.

A human-centred approach

Many, including the UN Secretary-General, have advanced the hypothesis that COVID-19 is not only a wake-up call, but also a dress rehearsal for the world of challenges to come – climate change above all. This calls for a just transition to environmental sustainability as an integral part of the recovery process. Governments and employers' and workers' organizations, through the *Global Call to Action for a Human-centred Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis* (ILO 2021b) commit to addressing the global dimensions of the crisis through enhanced international and regional cooperation, global solidarity and policy coherence across the economic, social, environmental, humanitarian and health domains, thereby enabling all countries to overcome the crisis and expedite progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. (para. 10)

The ILO Guidelines are a useful tool when constituents are implementing the transition to an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable future.

As stated in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (ILO 2019), we are at a time of transformative change in the world of work, driven by technological innovations, demographic shifts, environmental and climate change, and globalization, as well as at a time of persistent inequalities, which have profound impacts on the nature and future of work, and on the place and dignity of people in it.

It is imperative to act with urgency to seize the opportunities and address the challenges to shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.

Such a future of work is fundamental for sustainable development that puts an end to poverty and leaves no one behind. (I A, B and C)

The vision of the ILO Guidelines is that: "Managed well, with active involvement of the world of work, the green transition will also contribute to decent work, social inclusion and poverty eradication" (para. 8).

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▶ Who are the ILO Guidelines for?

The ILO Guidelines are for *ALL countries* and *ALL sectors.* This is important to stress as voices have sometimes argued that the ILO Guidelines can be followed by developed countries only and that the transition is only related to the energy sector.

First, the ILO Guidelines are for ALL *countries* independent of status of development. However, as stated in the guiding principles, there is no "one size fits all" (para. 13(f)). Policies and programmes need to be designed in line with the specific conditions of countries, including their stage of development, economic sectors and types and sizes of enterprises.

Second, the ILO Guidelines intends to cover ALL *sectors* – not only the energy sector with its transition from coal and other fossil fuels to renewables. Sectors particularly mentioned in the ILO Guidelines include agriculture, construction, recycling, waste management and tourism.

▶ Box 3. Global Union Federations on climate change and just transition

- Building and Wood Workers International - BWI
- Education International – EI
- IndustriALL
- International Federation of Journalists - IFJ
- International Transport Workers' Federation – ITF
- International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations - IUF
- Public Services International - PSI
- Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD - TUAC
- UNI Global Union

Third, the ILO Guidelines are for *ALL people*. It will be important to take into account the gender dimension in the transition. Women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation. The ILO Guidelines state that:

Policies and programmes need to take into account the strong gender dimension of many environmental challenges and opportunities. Specific gender policies should be considered in order to promote equitable outcomes (para. 13(c)).

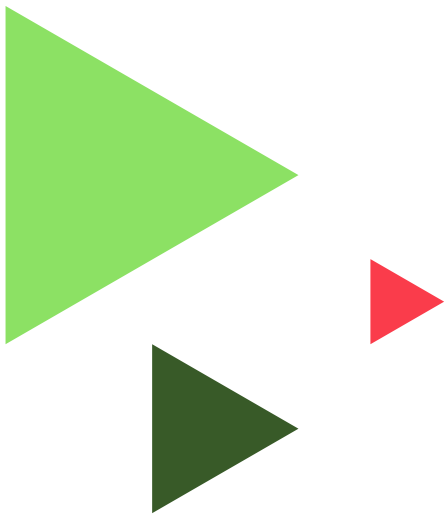
Why is this so?

Women often have lower access than men to resources to adapt to climate change, including land, credit, agricultural inputs, decision-making bodies, technology, social insurance and training. For example, water scarcity, especially in rural areas, can add to the daily workload of women who may be forced to cover large distances on foot in search of water.

For the majority of women working in the informal economy and in small enterprises, it is particularly difficult to recover from the effects of environmental disasters.

A just transition should not reproduce existing gender stereotypes in the new jobs which decarbonisation will generate. If we look at the energy sector, for instance, achieving gender equality in the renewable energy sector is crucial. Women are under-represented in the fossil fuel energy sector and also under-represented in the renewables sector. In some advanced economies, their share in renewable energy employment stands at around 20–25 per cent. In order to change this, targeted polices are needed (ILO 2018b).

Finally, the Guidelines also highlight the need to pay particular attention to certain groups of workers, including not only in the formal economy, but particularly those in the *informal economy*. The ILO Guidelines call for the establishment of targeted programmes in sectors where a significant proportion of workers and enterprises are informal with a view to promote formalization and awareness of social, economic and environmental policies. It also calls on Governments and the social partners to address the occupational safety and health (OSH) impacts of informality, and facilitate the transition towards the formal economy, in activities related to the greening of the economy, such as materials recovery and recycling, through training, capacity building, certification and, if necessary, legislation.



▶ Who should be involved in a just transition process?

One of the guiding principles of the ILO Guidelines is the need for strong social consensus on the goal and pathways to sustainability. Social dialogue has to be an integral part of the institutional framework for policymaking and implementation at all levels.

Social dialogue is defined by the ILO to include all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among *representatives of governments, employers and workers*, on issues of common interest. It can exist as a tripartite process with the government as an official party to the dialogue, or it may consist of bipartite relations only between trade unions and employers' organizations (the social partners), with or without indirect government involvement. A social dialogue process can be informal or institutionalized, and is often a combination of the two. It can take place at the national, regional or at enterprise level. It can be inter-professional, sectoral or a combination of these.

The main goal of social dialogue itself is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work.[6]

The ILO Guidelines include specific roles and responsibilities of both governments and the social partners at different levels (international, national, sectoral and enterprise levels). They also call on consultation with other stakeholders where necessary.

Despite the fact that a just transition should, according to the ILO definition, involve the social partners, this is not always the case. An analysis by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has found that most new climate plans submitted by governments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change lack sufficient ambition, just transition plans and social dialogue. In total, 136 governments were due to submit enhanced National Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2020, but only 79 have done so (ITUC 2021a). Of the 79 NDCs submitted, the ITUC analysis found that only 16 NDCs (13 per cent) make reference to the use of social dialogue (see box 4).

▶ Box.4. ITUC National Scorecards on NDCs

The National Scorecards include three indicators:

1. Climate ambition – plans to cut emissions by 2030, measures for climate adaptation and commitment to climate finance.
2. Just transition – plans for industries and sectors.
3. Social dialogue – workers and their unions have a seat at the table to design climate policies and their implementation.

Source: https://www.ituc-csi.org/scorecards-ndcs.

It is imperative that workers and their organizations lobby not only to have a seat at the table, but also to exert real influence.

6 Quoted from the ILO website "Social dialogue", at https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm.

▶ What is the policy coherence framework of the ILO Guidelines and why is it important?

The aim of the policy coherence framework of the ILO Guidelines is to make sure not only that environmental dimensions are looked at in the transition, but that we also take into account the economic and social dimensions.

A just transition is easier to achieve if the various policy areas are looked at in an integrated manner. Policymakers have to ensure that policies in one field are not undermining objectives and measures in other policy fields. This includes both horizontal and vertical coherence, as well as stakeholder coherence and coherence over time.

Horizontal coherence can be ensured if governments "integrate provisions for a just transition into the agendas of line ministries, rather than assigning them to only one ministry" (para. 15 (d)). Close collaboration between relevant national ministries, including ministries of economic planning and finance, is also needed, "with a view to establishing policies and programmes that can adapt to changes in the fiscal and political landscape" (para. 15 (e)). In order to develop skills policies for a greener future policy, for instance, coordination across ministries is key. An ILO study from 2019 (ILO 2019b) shows that ministries dealing with education and training and employment are weakly represented in policymaking on climate change and environment. The ILO Guidelines particularly call upon governments to ensure cooperation across policy areas.

Vertical coherence can be ensured by establishing and strengthening "institutional and technical capacities of subnational authorities at the regional and local levels to guide the transition, and to address the necessary changes in regional economies" (para. 15 (f)).

Stakeholder coherence is crucial for a just transition; the Guidelines state that governments should "provide opportunities for the participation of social partners at all possible levels and stages of the policy process through social dialogue and foster consultations with all other relevant stakeholders" (para. 15 (g)).

Coherence over time is also important. Governments should "provide stable policy signals based on social dialogue and a regulatory framework to enable sustainable enterprise development and decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty in the transition to sustainable economies" (para. 15 (a)). The reference to regulatory frameworks is important in order to ensure commitment to policies over time – independently of changing governments.

The ILO Guidelines highlight nine policy areas which should be taken into account in a just transition framework. Each includes issues to be addressed by governments, workers' and employers' organizations – separately and/or jointly.

I. Macroeconomic and growth policies
II. Industrial and sectoral policies
III. Enterprise policies
IV. Skills development
V. Occupational safety and health
VI. Social protection
VII. Active labour market policies
VIII. Rights
IX. Social dialogue and tripartism

The following section on international labour standards (ILS) complements the ILO Guidelines in these policy areas. The most pertinent standards for each area are selected, but others may also be relevant.

▶ How can international labour standards (ILS) support a just transition?

Annex I to the ILO Guidelines is an integral part of the tool and should be duly taken into consideration during planning, implementation and monitoring.

As the Conclusions to the Resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs from the 2013 International Labour Conference (ILC) state:

- International labour standards offer a robust framework for addressing the challenges to the world of work associated with the greening of the economy and, more broadly, with the transition towards sustainable development and poverty eradication (para. 14 (m)).

The Guidelines refer to these conclusions when governments are asked to "consider and promote those international labour standards most relevant to the just transition framework towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (as listed in the appendix of the ILC 2013 conclusions), with a view to their ratification and full implementation" (para. 15 (b)).[7]

International labour standards (ILS) should be used hand in hand with the ILO Guidelines. Each of the nine policy areas of the ILO Guidelines can be addressed through ILS, which are important tools in the transition. Here are some examples:

Macroeconomic and growth policies

The ILO advocates for employment-led economic growth, respecting decent work and ILS. Central to this issue are the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) and Recommendation (No. 122), together with the Employment Policy Recommendation (Supplementary Provisions), 1984 (No. 169); and the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168) and Recommendation (No. 176).

These ILS require or encourage workers' organizations' involvement in the elaboration or adoption of such policies. As such, workers can demand that, for example, a just transition framework is incorporated into macroeconomic policies, as recommended by the ILO Guidelines.

Industrial and sectoral policies

Many ILS relevant to this policy area are also relevant to that on occupational safety and health (OSH). These concern, for example, agriculture (Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184) and Recommendation (No. 192)); chemicals and waste management (Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170) and Recommendation (No. 177)). See in particular, the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), which puts the protection of the environment on an equal footing with that of workers and the public when it calls on Member States to implement a policy concerning the protection of workers, the public, and the environment against the risk of major accidents. The Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) has recalled that the focus of Convention No. 174 "is not only on the management of accidents in such installations, nor on environmental law, but on the management of major industrial accidents to which not only workers, but also the environment and the public are exposed".[8]

7 For a more thorough investigation on how international labour standards are relevant to climate change, see World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs (ILO 2018b), pp. 71–81.

8 See NORMLEX, at https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3146249. See also ILO 2018b, p. 78.

Enterprise policies

Paragraph 21 of the ILO Guidelines states that "Governments in consultation with social partners should: ... (d) develop national policies and plans for mitigation, adaptation to climate change and disaster preparedness closely with business associations, workers' organizations and other stakeholders to strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change and promote disaster preparedness information and insurance."

- The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), which will be addressed in more detail in the section on the eighth policy area ("rights") deals explicitly with this issue. It notably advocates that governments should develop and promote all the measures related to response to crisis situations in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.
- More general to this policy area is the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) which ensures that rights are enforced.

Skills development

Retraining workers and upgrading their skills is essential to ensure just transitions. Many ILS refer to skills development, including the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) but also, for example, Recommendation No. 169 already mentioned; Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) and Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No.143); Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No.155) and its Protocol, 2002 (No. 155); Transition from the Formal to the Informal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204); and Recommendation No. 205 already mentioned. Additional relevant ILS include:

- The Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140), which is concerned specifically with the granting of paid educational leave for the purpose of training at any level, general, social, and civic education, and trade union education.
- The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which clearly states in article 1 that "Members should, based on social dialogue, formulate, apply and review national human resources development, education, training and lifelong learning policies which are consistent with economic, fiscal and social policies". It mentions the need to "achieve sustainable economic and social development"; just transition fits into this goal.

Occupational safety and health (OSH)

Many general ILS fall under this policy area, including Convention No. 155 and its Protocol No. 155 (OSH); the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); (the Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1985 (No. 171); and also more targeted ILS such as the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148) and Recommendation (No. 156) (see below); the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No.162) and Recommendation (No. 172); the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174); the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176) and Recommendation (No. 183); and the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184) and Recommendation (No. 192). The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC, 2006) also protects the health and safety of maritime workers, therefore preventing accidents that can be harmful to the environment.

Some ILS deal with stress at work induced by climate change or working conditions more generally, others with the elimination or reduction of production processes that could damage the environment, respect for ecological thresholds or waste minimization. Of specific relevance are, for example:

- The Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148) which requests concrete action against air pollution: each member needs to have legal measures for the prevention and control of, and protection against, occupational hazards due to air pollution, noise, and vibration (article 4(1)). Recommendation No.156 is the first international labour standard to explicitly link the working and general environment when it states that when prescribing measures, "the competent authority should take account of the relationship between the protection of the working environment and the protection of the general environment" (para. 15).
- The Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170) and Recommendation (No. 177), which cover all branches of economic activity in which chemicals are used. Convention No.170 provides for a comprehensive national framework for the safe use of chemicals at work, including the formulation, implementation, and periodic review of a coherent policy (article 4). The Convention notes in its preamble that the protection of workers from the harmful effects of chemicals also enhances the protection of the general public and the environment. Article 14 deals directly with the disposal of chemicals and its impact on the environment (see box 5).

▶ Box 5. The ILO Chemical Convention, 1990 (No. 170): Disposal of chemicals

Article 14: *The CEACR requested information on how it is ensured "that hazardous chemicals which are no longer required and containers which have been emptied but which may contain residues of hazardous chemicals,* are handled or disposed of in a manner which eliminates or minimizes the risk to the environment."

Source: CEACR, Belgium, 2020.

Social protection

Universal social protection, as understood in the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No.102) and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), refers to actions and measures to progressively build and maintain nationally appropriate social protection systems that are comprehensive, sustainably financed and provide adequate protection. It is crucial to have universal social protection to ensure just transitions that leave no one behind. The Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security), adopted at the International Labour Conference in June 2021, highlights the provision of universal access to social protection systems to facilitate a just transition to more environmentally sustainable economies and societies (ILO 2021c). Many more specific ILS on social protection are listed here.

Active labour market policies (ALMP)

The Convention most relevant to active labour market policies is certainly the governance Convention No. 122. Concerned with stimulating economic growth and development, raising levels of living, meeting workforce requirements and overcoming unemployment and underemployment, convention No. 122 requires governments "to declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment" (art. 1(1)). This policy is essential as an overarching tool that can spell out a vision to fully engage with just transitions.

- The Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) is particularly relevant to this policy area, as training is part of ALMP, through, in particular, public employment services. Convention No. 142 requires governments "to adopt and develop comprehensive and co-ordinated policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training, (...) in particular through public employment services" (art 1(1)).

Rights

"Rights" are the eighth policy area of the ILO Guidelines. Thus, rights and ILS are both a cross-cutting dimension to each of the policy areas in the ILO Guidelines and also represent a policy area in their own right.

New ILS have been adopted since the ILO Guidelines were adopted in 2015. This includes the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). The Recommendation (i) deals directly with crisis situations resulting from disasters that can be caused by climate change; and (ii) it advocates for response and recovery measures that take into account just transitions – it actually mentions the "need for a just transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy" no less than three times, including in its guiding principles.

Video: How Recommendation No. 205 applies to human made/natural disasters and climate change.

Mention needs to be made of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). It is of interest for two reasons: it contains a number of explicit references to the environment and it provides a framework to ensure indigenous peoples' consultation and participation in decision-making. It is the only international treaty specifically addressing indigenous peoples' rights, which are highly relevant for local, national and international efforts to sustain the traditional knowledge of indigenous communities, and for climate action more broadly.

Furthermore, ILS related to migrant workers are also very relevant when we discuss climate change and just transitions, as migrants may have left their country for reasons related directly or indirectly to climate change - see Conventions Nos. 97 and 143 already mentioned, as well as the Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151).

Social dialogue and tripartism

The final policy area is related to social dialogue and tripartism. The application of the rights provided in Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 ensure, through social dialogue, public participation and consultation which are crucial to sustainable development. Without these, societies cannot be inclusive, equitable, or democratic.

- Other relevant ILS include the Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141) and Recommendation (No.149) on the organization of rural and agricultural workers. These also indirectly benefit migrant workers, who are often highly involved in agriculture.

▶ How can workers use the ILO Guidelines?

The ILO Guidelines call particularly upon the social partners to address specific aspects of the transition under each of the policy areas. Certain general appeals can be highlighted.

Awareness raising

One of the appeals to the social partners in the ILO Guidelines is to raise awareness and provide guidance among members regarding the just transition framework. This can be done, for instance, through campaigns, training and education, research and media outreach.

In 2020 the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) launched its campaign *Climate and Employment Proof our Work* (#CEPOW). Workers around the world invited their employers to share a conversation to discuss the plans for resilience and sustainable business – safety, jobs, emissions, and secure pathway for the future. The day of action in 2021 – 22 September – was accompanied by the guide "Climate- and Employment-proof Our Work" (ITUC 2021b).

On 21 April 2021, Education International launched a multilevel campaign to ensure that climate education, based on science with a civic action focus, becomes as fundamental as teaching reading and writing.

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) has produced significant research on just transition and climate change. On its sustainable development agenda, the ETUI studies the role of the social partners in effecting the transition towards a low-carbon society, placing emphasis on the social aspects of climate change and the necessary energy transformation.

When trade unions are proactive, there are clear results. Every year, the international trade union movement participates in the annual UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (the COPs) – with a growing number of participants. These gatherings are important meeting spaces for advocacy of union demands. The inclusion of reference to just transition in the Paris Agreement is largely due to persistent push from the international trade union movement. In 2018, the UNFCCC-COP24 in Katowice adopted the *Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration* (UNFCCC 2018), a demand initiated by the trade unions (ITUC). At the UN Climate Change Conference, COP25 in 2019, the UN Secretary-General and the ILO Director-General launched the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative. Forty-six countries made commitments to support a transition by formulating national plans in line with the ILO *Guidelines on Just Transition*.

Trade unions need to continue this work and ensure that these commitments are not only promises on paper, but are implemented in line with the ILO Guidelines' definition of just transition.

Social dialogue

Trade unions should play an active role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national sustainable development policies and promote participation in social dialogue at all levels.

According to a global poll commissioned by the ITUC in 2020:[9]

- 69 per cent are worried about climate change.
- 63 per cent think their government should do more to promote a just transition to a zero-carbon future.
- 63 per cent believe working people have too little influence (ITUC 2020).

It is important that trade unions are familiar with their countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement and ensure that their implementation takes into account the impact on the labour market and jobs and includes just transition and decent work considerations.

Through the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative, the ILO and its partners are supporting countries on solutions for a just transition. The initiative will strengthen national mechanisms for social dialogue among governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other key stakeholders, which will define common agendas and solutions. It is important that trade unions are fully involved in these mechanisms.

Collective agreements

Collective agreements could take a leading role in driving the just transition towards a carbon-neutral economy, but in practice they do not regard this objective as a priority. Environmental clauses in collective agreements are still exceptional and lack momentum (Gutiérrez and Tomassetti 2020).

In Canada, the Work in a Warming World (W3) research programme has compiled a collection of "greening" clauses from Canadian collective agreements that are publicly available (ACW database n.d.). The dissemination of this information is intended to aid unions who want to fight climate change by bringing environmental issues into their collective bargaining priorities

Trade unions should use this traditional tool also in the work for a just transition – both in its process and its outcome.

9 The poll was conducted in February and March 2020 and was commissioned by the ITUC from global market research company YouGov. It covers 16 countries (Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States) – representing 56 per cent of the global population).

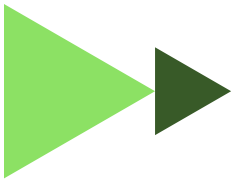
International labour standards (ILS)

Developing a Convention on just transition has been raised at the ILO's Governing Body. However, there has not been much support on this to date except from the Workers' Group. It is therefore important that existing ILS are used, including in the work on implementing the NDCs, and that unions continue to work towards the development and adoption of a future standard by the International Labour Conference.

NORMLEX country profiles provide information on which Conventions specific countries have ratified and on the reporting schedule to the CEACR (under 'Regular reporting (Art. 22/35)'). This allows unions to lobby for ratifications and to submit timely comments on ratified Conventions.

- Workers' organizations can demand the application of ratified Conventions and they can request ratification.
- Workers can demand that due consideration is given to ILO Recommendations, such as Recommendation No. 205. This Recommendation was adopted following the same process as that used for Conventions, and was adopted with overwhelming support by all ILO constituents.
- Workers' organizations can submit comments to the CEACR on relevant ratified ILS, highlighting the impact of climate change on workers and the necessity for just transitions.
- Workers' organizations can insist that new standards yet to be adopted include provisions on just transition and continue to promote the development of an international labour standard on just transition.

In June 1990 the International Labour Conference adopted a Resolution concerning environment, development, employment and the role of the ILO. It also instructed the ILO to take due account of environmental aspects in developing new, and revising existing, international labour standards to protect the working and general environment and promote environmentally sound economic and social development.



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▶ What is the ILO Bureau for Workers' Organizations (ACTRAV) doing?

ACTRAV's work on environmental issues and just transition includes three elements:

- Advocacy and policy advice
- Capacity building
- Research and materials development

ACTRAV participates in conferences and meetings at different levels to promote a just transition through social dialogue following the ILO Guidelines.

ACTRAV develops capacity-building activities at all levels and in cooperation with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin. In 2021, ACTRAV developed an online training module (see box 6) that addresses the main challenges in fulfilling the established climate goals, how just transition can work in practice and what trade unions and workers' organizations can do. It has a clear focus on the ILO Guidelines.

▶ Box 6. Training module: Just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

In 2021, ACTRAV developed an online training module that addresses the main challenges in fulfilling the established climate goals, how just transition can work in practice and what trade unions and workers' organizations can do. It has a clear focus on the ILO Guidelines.

Learning objectives

At the end of the module, participants should be able to:

- explain why the labour movement has to be at the forefront of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction to make just transition a success;
- define the concept of just transition and identify the two main dimensions;
- identify whether their organization is following the ILO Guidelines recommendations and explain what agents of change are;
- identify whether their country has been implementing the NDCs in a holistic way;
- discuss whether developed or non-developed countries should be implementing just transition; and
- select recommendations and actions for trade unions to implement.

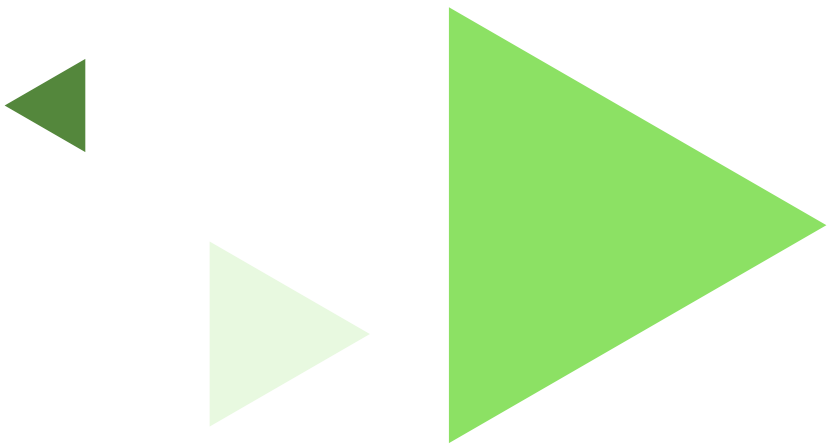
In 2018, ACTRAV carried out a number of regional seminars on Recommendation No. 205 for workers' organizations.

ACTRAV provides input to research and materials of the ILO's Green Jobs Network and produces its own publications on relevant issues for trade unions. In 2018, ACTRAV published the "Policy Brief on Just Transition" that includes case studies illustrating concrete examples that could help to formulate trade union strategies. Both positive and negative experiences are taken into account, followed by recommendations.

There are clear linkages between Recommendation No. 205 and the climate change debate, environmental sustainability, and the effects of environmental degradation such as deforestation and pollution, as well as just transitions. ACTRAV has developed materials on Recommendation No. 205 that include the following publications:

- ILO ACTRAV Policy Brief: Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience: What Role for Trade Unions?
- Workers' Guide to Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205)
- *Managing Conflicts and Disasters: Exploring Collaboration between Employers' and Workers' Organizations (publication produced jointly with the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP)*)
- COVID-19 and R205: what role for workers' organizations?

A training manual on conflict and disasters also complements this work.



▶ Where can I find more information online?

International Labour Organization (ILO)

- ILO Green Jobs Programme
- The Green Jobs Assessment Institutions Network (GAIN)
- The 19th ICLS Guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector (which also includes a definition of "green jobs"). National statistics offices will need to be supported to collect the needed data to support research and inform policy. The ILO has been engaged in a few countries to support countries with measurement in labour force surveys and establishment surveys, but the work has not kept pace with the needs for this information.
- The GAIN Training Guidebook: How to measure and model social and employment outcomes of climate and sustainable development policies. A number of studies have been conducted using the GJ Assessment model which is helping countries navigate the policy options and expected impacts on employment.
- Decent Work Indicators – Guidelines for producers and users of statistical and legal framework indicators. This is essential for monitoring progress at the national level towards achieving decent work, through both statistical and legal framework indicators.

Other UN agencies and initiatives

- UNFCCC - Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- UNFCCC – COPs
- The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)

Trade unions

- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)- Just Transition Centre

Other initiatives

- Climate Action for Jobs Initiative

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